

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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POUCHED AS INFO TO ALL CONSULATES IN CANADA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJ: PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP RACE

1. SUMMARY: IN FINAL TWO WEEKS OF LEADERSHIP RACE  
WAGNER AND MULRONEY REMAIN FRONT-RUNNERS, THOUGH FORMER  
SHOWS SIGNS OF HAVING PEAKED WHILE LATTER CONTINUES TO  
MAKE IMPRESSIVE GAINS. LARGE NUMBER OF UNCOMMITTED  
DELEGATES AND EMERGENCY OF DARK HORSES LIKE SINCLAIR  
STEVENS, HOWEVER, SERVE TO REMIND PUNDITS THAT THIS RACE  
IS STILL TOO UNPREDICTABLE TO CALL.

2. MAJOR DEVELOPMENT IN RACE SINCE REFTEL REPORT HAS  
BEEN GROWING STRENGTH OF BRAIN MULRONEY, WHOM MANY TORY  
WATCHERS NOW CONSIDER IN BEST POSITION TO TAKE LEADERSHIP.  
TORONTO STAR POLL OF 351 DELEGATES AT END OF JANUARY SHOWS  
MULRONEY NARROWLY TRAILING WAGNER ON FIRST BALLOT BUT  
WELL AHEAD OF ALL CANDIDATES AS SECOND CHOICE. FIRST  
BALLOT LINE-UP RUNS WAGNER 17.2 PERCENT OF DELEGATES,  
MULRONEY 14.9, HELLYER 10.0, SINCLAIR STEVENS 9.6,  
AND FLORA MACDONALD 8.3. OF DELEGATES WHO NAMED  
SECOND CHOICE 25.1 PERCENT FAVORED MULRONEY, 15.4  
STEVENS, 12.6 MACDONALD AND HELLYER, AND 12.0 WAGNER.

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3. ABOVE MUST BE MITIGATED BY FACTS THAT ONLY 50 PERCENT OF DELEGATES INTERVIEWED NAMED SECOND CHOICE AND 22.5 PERCENT WERE EVEN UNDECIDED ON FIRST BALLOT. STILL, POLL SUGGESTS THAT MULRONEY STRONGER THAN MANY SUSPECTED ON FIRST BALLOT AND LIKELY TO GAIN, WHILE WAGNER LOSES, ON SUBSEQUENT BALLOTS, PARTICULARLY SINCE MULRONEY HAS SECOND-CHOICE LEAD AMONG SUPPORTERS OF CANDIDATES LIKELY TO DROP OUT EARLY. MULRONEY HAS MADE INROADS INTO WAGNER SUPPORT IN QUEBEC WHILE ALSO STRONGLY BACKED IN ATLANTIC PROVINCES AND BY OUTH DELEGATES. ADDITIONAL MULRONEY ADVANTAGE IS REPORTED ABUNDANCE OF FUNDS IN EXPENSIVE CAMPAIGN WHICH IS STRAINING POCKET BOOKS OF OTHER CANDIDATES. MULRONEY CLAIMS HE IS IN SAME 100-150 THOUSAND BALL PARK AS OTHER LEADING CONTENDERS, THOUGH THEY ACCUSE HIM OF REPEATEDLY "RAISING STAKES" WITH LITTLE EFFORT.

4. MULRONEY'S POPULARITY DUE IN LARGE PART TO FEELING THAT HE IS ONLY CANDIDATE WITH LOOK AND TALENT TO BEAT TRUDEAU. RECENT GALLUP POLL SHOWING TORIES TRAILING LIBERALS BY ONLY 2 PERCENTAGE POINTS (WITH 42 PERCENT OF ELECTORATE UNDECIDED ON PARTY PREFERENCE) AND MOUNTING PRESS CRITICISM OF TRUDEAU MAY LEAD TORIES TO TAKE A CHANCE ON YOUNG AND CHARISMATIC PERSONALITY WHO MIGHT GIVE PARTY NEEDED PUSH IN ELECTIONS RATHER THAN ON EXPERIENCED AND TRADITIONAL LEADER A LA STANFIELD. MULRONEY'S LACK OF FEDERAL EXPERIENCE REMAINS HANDICAP, HOWEVER, AND IRONICALLY BOTH RIVALS WAGNER AND MULRONEY ARE PLAGUED BY FORMER'S TRUST FUND AFFAIRS, FOR WHICH MULRONEY WAS ALLEGEDLY ONE OF MIDDLEMEN AND WHICH FOLLOWS BOTH CANDIDATES ON CAMPAIGN TRAIL.

5. SURPRISING ASPECT OF STAR POLL IS STRENGTH OF SINCLAIR STEVENS, A RIGHT-WING CANDIDATE FROM ONTARIO WHO HAS MADE KNOWN HIS FEELING THAT TORIES ARE PATROIZING QUEBEC BY BEING MORE SOLICITOUS OF VOTES IN THAT PROVINCE THAN ELSEWHERE. STEVENS APPEARS IN FACT AS CAREFUL BUT THINLY-DISGUISED ANTI-FRANCOPHONE WHOSE STANDING IN RACE MAY WELL BE BOLSTERED BY GROWING RESENTMENT IN TORY RANKS TO BILINGUALISM. IMPORTANCE OF THIS ISSUE SHOWN IN LEONARD JONES AFFAIRS, WHICH CON-

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TINUES TO BE ALBATROSS AROUND PC NECK. OUSTING JONES FROM LEADERSHIP RACE ON GROUNDS OF PAST EXCLUSION FROM CAUCUS (BECAUSE OF OPPOSITION TO BILINGUALISM) STARTED PARTY DEBATE WHICH THREATENED TO DOMINATE RACE UNTIL CAUCUS DECIDED LAST WEEK TO REFER MATTER BACK TO CONVENTION COMMITTEE FOR REVIEW. ALL CANDIDATES ARE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO BILINGUALISM ISSUE, WITH EVEN FRANCOPHONE WAGNER REFUSING TO

ENDORSE CBC PLANS FOR FRENCH TV CHANNEL IN VANCOUVER,  
WHICH LEADERSHIP CANDIDATE JOHN FRASER FROM B.C.  
VEHEMENTLY OPPOSES.

6. BECAUSE OF LARGE NUMBER OF BOTH CANDIDATES AND  
UNCOMMITTED DELEGATES, RACE REMAINS UNPREDICTABLE AND  
MAY EVEN GO TO SOMEONE LIKE STEVENS, WHO GENERALLY CON-  
SIDERED DARK HORSE BEFORE STAR POLL. WITH LESS  
THAN TWO WEEKS TO GO BEFORE BALLOTING, HOWEVER, SUPPORTERS  
OF MULRONEY APPEAR MORE CONFIDENT THAN EVER BEFORE THAT  
THEIR MAN WILL BE NEXT TORY LEADER. JOHNSON

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